

# **McPhillips Farms**

**13000 SW McPhillips Road**

**McMinnville Oregon 97128**

June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dear Oregon House Committee on Rules,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed dash-17 amendment to House Bill 3414, which aims to allow a one-time exception to Oregon's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) regulations. As a manager of my family's 600-acre farm in McMinnville, a property that has been in our family for 162 years, I understand the value and importance of preserving our agricultural land.

Our farm is situated on the outskirts of the UGB boundary and boasts class 1 and 2 soils. Over the years, I have worked tirelessly to maintain the farm within our family, ensuring its size is sufficient to sustain our livelihood. There is immense societal pressure to include our farm within the UGB, with the notion that dividing it into housing lots would yield substantial financial gain. However, I firmly believe that such a move would not result in lower real estate prices in Oregon for Oregonians'. The idea that "more" development equates to "less" expense is fundamentally flawed. Infill, on a macro scale means selling off our farmland will fill in our farmland with a relative few who can afford to move here and pay today's new going expensive values. Instead, Oregon needs to infill the cities with low and, middle income housing that average folks can afford by going up, and in multiples that make urban living so efficient, so 'affordable' to maintain for the common good.

It is evident that the days of easily affordable homes or farms like mine are long gone. Unless Oregon addresses the decline in middle-class job opportunities, the dream of owning a home will become increasingly unattainable for younger generations. Constructing homes that people cannot afford will not solve the housing crisis; it will merely make housing available to a select few. Therefore, before the state disregards 50 years of exemplary land-use policy centered around the UGB 20-year principle, it should focus on thoughtful housing options within the UGB that cater to middle and lower-income individuals. Senate Bill 2001, also known as the Middle Housing infill bill, has yet to be fully implemented, and yet the development interests are already seeking to encroach upon our valuable farmland. Hold off giving a one-time gimme to the housing developers while we see if the new infill laws help with the housing shortage.

Farming is a business, comparable to a housing development in many aspects. However, what cannot be denied is that when a housing development convinces the state legislature to encroach upon farmland for their purposes, the farming business has no say in the matter. Oregon's land-use policy has traditionally been designed from the city outwards, rather than from the farm

inwards. I do not possess city voting rights, nor can I run for office in the city where you are considering allowing this sudden "taking" of UGB-bordered farms like mine for housing. McMinnville has just undergone a 20-year expansion, and it is disheartening to witness the continuous attempts to acquire more land so soon after it took so much of our valuable farm businesses.

I implore you to uphold the rules and regulations that have been in place for 50 years, safeguarding farms like mine and ensuring that they can continue to provide for my family, your constituents, and the broader consumer base. These policies have proven invaluable, and it is vital to maintain them to protect our economic agricultural heritage.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Ramsey McPhillips

McPhillips Farms

Since 1862.